

Book Reviews

Medical Genetics: Ian D Young. Oxford Core Texts. Oxford University Press, 2005. (p. 315.) £22.00. ISBN 0-19-856494-5



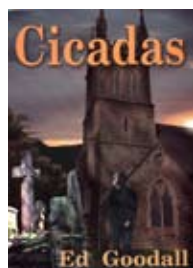
Medical Genetics has long been a part of the undergraduate curriculum and is a rapidly increasing component of post-graduate training at all levels, in all specialities. Ian Young has provided a textbook which will delight both undergraduate and postgraduate readers.

There are many textbooks which claim to cover essential medical genetic teaching, but many of these are too big, too detailed and too expensive. This text is presented in a clear, logical manner with well illustrated chapters and excellent use of colour for key points and boxes. The text is interspersed with case histories, landmark publications and the novel use of a “case célèbre” to illustrate many chapters – and what an excellent memory tool that is. Do you know why Dolly the sheep was called Dolly? Or that Frédéric Chopin may have had cystic fibrosis? There are fourteen chapters from the first “Gene structure and function” travelling through the realm of clinical genetics to end with chapters on “Clinical skills” (so you think you know how to interpret a laboratory report?) and “Applied clinical genetics”. The useful appendices cover medical school core curriculum and teaching medical genetics to undergraduate medical students. Each chapter ends with a few MCQs, the answers having succinct explanations.

Ian Young is respected world-wide as a clinician, author and teacher of medical genetics. From Northern Ireland originally, he has not lost the art of communication. This is a text clinicians at any level will enjoy either for serious study or occasional casual reading (it is just about the right size and has enough flexibility for reading in bed). My one criticism is that it was not available when I needed it as a student (far too many years ago).

ALEX MAGEE

Cicadas: Ed Goodall. Blueberry Press. November 2004. ISBN 0-9548705-0-6. £7.99 (inc. postage and packing direct from www.blueberrypub.com).



An Irish-American medic called Gus McWilliams returns home to Northern Ireland, his urgent mission to find a donor kidney for his ill son – whose renal function is deteriorating – at all costs. His own kidney problems suggest hereditary renal disease and other modern (and old) ethical and genetic dilemmas feature in this novel where in the quiet village of Rostrevor, his genealogy research uncovers a mysterious crime committed in the last century against his ancestors. He uncovers evidence of a 19th century rogue scientist called Diogenes who has discovered the secrets of human cloning. Sinister elements from both

sides of the local terrorist divide mix with some international terrorism from the aftermath of 9/11 to both aid and hinder his research leading to an exciting climax.

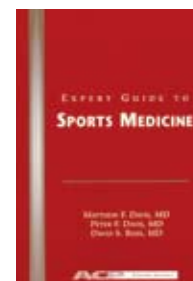
This is an altogether gripping tale of a doctor struggling to combine his research skills with a hope that he can save his son's life. Goodall has woven a masterpiece of intrigue in a book that will appeal to all. His attention to detail draws on his own research and veterinary background and is fastidious. Factual information is stretched credibly to give a book full of surprises; personal ethics is stretched to the limit.

The book contains 28 beautifully short chapters – just short enough to read individually in a few snatched spare moments of time such as between consultations or in the departure lounge. As the story gets more exciting by the chapter, these are gobbled up by compulsive reading as the patients sit in the waiting area wondering why the ‘consultation’ is taking so long . . .

PATRICK J MORRISON

Expert Guide to Sports Medicine:

Matthew F Davis, Peter F Davis, David S Ross (Editors). ACP series-Expert Guides, American College of Physicians, October 2005. 165pp. £24.95. ISBN 1-930513-64-X



Books are a generation thing. Inevitably out of date before they are published, seldom peer reviewed, and rarely reflecting a systematic search of evidence. Medical textbooks are the ultimate in vanity publishing. We all love to see our names on the sleeves. But, with every new book, irrespective of the specialty, we need ask what it adds. Most are simply a repetition of last year's knowledge.

Sports medicine is no different. While it is difficult for any textbook to capture the latest research findings and keep pace with clinical innovations, this book tries hard. Published by the American College of Physicians (ACP), which has a good pedigree in evidence based medicine, I expected innovation. But, this is a traditional textbook aimed at practicing primary care doctors. And with 10% of consultations for musculoskeletal injury, there is a big market. So, if faced with a clinical question in the surgery, would you look to this book for the answer? Let's try out some topical issues – Sudden cardiac death has particular resonance locally and a very difficult problem. No clinical examination alone is likely to pick up at risk individuals in primary care, yet many guidelines still imply that clinical examination has a role. This book does not dodge the question and states that “give the large numbers of athletes to be screened, non invasive testing is thought to be cost- prohibitive and troubled by both false positive and false negative tests”. It addresses the appropriate tests necessary in a pre-participation examination, states the limitations honestly, and doesn't shirk the issue of medico legal liability.

The phone rings. An invitation to provide medical cover at a major sports event. What should you do and how do you prepare? This is another interesting and useful chapter and although it is rather US focused, the principles are the same. Recent high profile tragedies in mass participation running